when enacted would recognise the rights of forest dwelling scheduled tribes relating to their (a) tenurial security, providing them relief against the physical and psychological alienation of land belonging to them; (b) livelihood, in terms of subsistence agriculture and ownership of minor forest produce, including rights to collect trade and collect the same; and (c) traditional and customary rights.

Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill

854. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill has been examined by the Select Committee;

(b) the extent of forests land encroached upon by the forest dwellers and the percentage of those settlements which have been regularized in the name of the tribals; and

(c) whether the Bill proposes to treat October 25,1980 as the cutoff date for recognition of legitimate rights over the land occupied by the tribals and if so, the rationale behind fixing this date as the cut-off mark?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRi P.R. KYNDIAH). (a) The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill, 2005, introduced by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the Lok Sabha on 13 December, 2005, has been referred to a Joint Committee of both the Houses for examination. The Joint Committee is yet to submit its report.

(b) As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, 13.43 lakh hectares of forest land is under encroachment in the country. So far 3.66 lakh hectares of forest land have been regularised. The information regarding percentage of settlement regularised in the name of tribals is maintained by the State Governments.

(c) Yes, Sir. The rationale behind fixing October 25, 1980 as the cut-off date for recognition of legitimate rights over the land occupied by the tribals is that the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980 had come into force on this date.